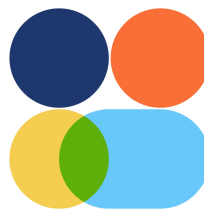


LESSON PLAN



Theme *Hakafot* on Simchat Torah

Grade Level(s)

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Time of lesson 45 Minutes

Key Ideas

- The highlight of this holiday (which means “The Joy of the Torah”) is the *hakafot*.
- Held on both the eve and the morning of Simchat Torah, we march and dance with the Torah scrolls.
- Simchat Torah is a celebration in which everyone can dance in their own way; everyone can be included in the celebration.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- define *hakafot* and know that celebrants circle 7 - or, in some traditions, 3 - times around the bimah.
- know that the Torah is completed and a new cycle begins on Simchat Torah.
- understand that different people do things in different ways.

Materials & Resources

- music player with appropriate music selection ready
- room that has open space for movement and is free of obstacles

Warm-up and Overview

- Students will participate in a freeze dance activity. When the music stops, each player must freeze and hold their position until the music begins again. If players do not freeze immediately, they do a jumping jack and then start the next round to rejoin the dance.
- If there are students with physical limitations, allow options for students to do something else that is appropriate based on their physical ability (i.e. balance on one foot, sit on the floor, clap their hands).

Introduction

- Discuss how people sometimes use dance as a form of celebration. Show a [video](#) (start at 4:10) of people participating in *hakafot*. Remind the students that everyone in the video moves their body in a way that feels good to them.
- On Simchat Torah, one of the ways we celebrate is by dancing with the Torah. Explain to the students that during *hakafot* some celebrants circle seven or three times around the *bimah*.

Specific Accommodations

- Ensure that placement of video allows everyone the ability to view it. When striving to make video content accessible to blind and low-vision individuals, it is best practice to verbalize all relevant visual information. Remember that you only need to explain the visuals to the extent necessary for a blind or low-vision viewer to understand.

Activity

- The teacher will demonstrate a dance move and then the students will all be asked to copy the move.
- Throughout the activity, the teacher continuously should be pointing out positive things that students are doing that might be a little different from what was demonstrated. Example: If the dance move the teacher does is clapping hands in the air and a student copies by clapping in front of their body the teacher could say, "Wow, I like how you are repeating my dance moves – some students are clapping above their head and others are doing it out in front. Both are such joyous ways to dance!" The teacher can point out that everyone moves in their own way and that we don't all look the same.

Specific

Accommodations

- Put hula hoops on the floor and ask students to dance within their circle in order to stay in their own space. Remind students to keep their hands and body in the circle.
- For individuals who are not comfortable with dancing, the opportunity for them to watch or participate in a way that feels appropriate to them should be offered.

Options for Extensions

- Have the students take turns being the one to demonstrate a dance move.
- Combine freeze dance and the dancing activity. When the music stops a new person leads the activity.

Options for Remediation

- Allow students who do not understand the rules to watch one round before participating.
- Have students think about other ways they like to show joy.

Review and Closing

- Ask students to reflect on the experience. How did it feel to be the leader? How did it feel to be asked to stop moving quickly?
- Ask students:
 - Is this dancing how you would celebrate the Torah?
 - Would it make you nervous to dance like this while holding the Torah?

Specific Accommodations

- allow wait time.
- give students the option of taking a "pass" and not answering the questions

Checking for Understanding

- Take note of who participates in the final discussion and assess who and what questions are answered.